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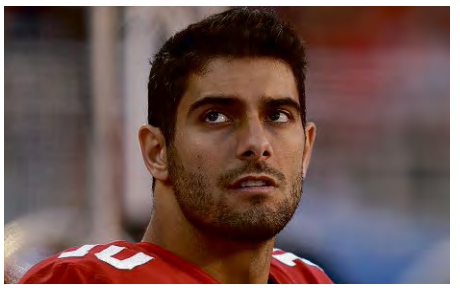

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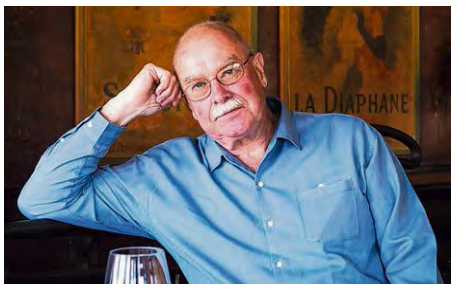

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W. Sac police consider 3 deaths murder-suicide

JOSÉ LUIS VILLEGAS jvillegas@sacbee.com

Melanie Fristoe embraces her daughter Rosie Fristoe at the candlelight vigil for Sophie and Sara Rouin, who were allegedly killed by their father, Hamdy Rouin, on New Year's Eve. Rouin was to have returned his daughters to their mother's custody after a visitation.

Father with abusive record killed 2 daughters and himself, cops say

BY STEPHEN MAGAGNINI, CASSIE DICKMAN AND ANITA CHABRIA
smagagnini@sacbee.com

Amy Hunter arrived at a parking lot near her home in West Sacramento on New Year's Eve to pick up her daughters, Sara, 9 and Sophie, 12.

The spot near West Sacramento's City Hall was the designated drop-off point for the girls, whose parents had been involved in a custody battle for years, said Julie Jenkins, who knows Hunter and owns the Caring Connection Children's Center, where Hunter worked as a teacher.

This time, she said, the girls never got out of the car.

They were later declared dead at UC Davis Medical Center in what West Sacramento police said was a murder-suicide by their father, Hamdy Rouin, 46, a Tunisian immigrant who was also found dead in the car. Police said there were no visible injuries on the girls, and their cause of death had not been released as of Tuesday afternoon.

In court filings, Hunter described Rouin as an abusive husband and heavy drinker who had hit her, threatened to throw the cat out the car window and told her he would take the girls away to Tunisia. Rouin was scheduled to appear Tuesday morning in Yolo Superior Court for violating a protective order, court records show.

GoFundMe

Pictures on the GoFundMe page in support of their mother, Amy Hunter, identify her two slain daughters as Sophia and Sara.

Jenkins said Hunter is in a state of shock, but is being supported by her mother, who flew in from Las Vegas, and other family and friends from her Islamic religious community. About 100 people gathered Tuesday evening for a vigil in front of the Casa Mobile Park, where Hunter lived with her daughters.

"It's really heartbreaking," said neighbor Calvin Lopez.

Beth Hassett, head of Sacramento's WEAVE organization, which helps victims of domestic violence escape, called the apparent double homicide "the worst-case scenario" for a mother trying to escape an abusive relationship.

"We see perpetrators of domestic violence trying to continue to control the victim even after the divorce is final," Hassett said. "The ultimate move is to kill themselves or the children."

Often, she said, a court date can be a triggering event.

"It breaks my heart when we see victims who have done everything right using the tools available to them and they still end up with such a tragic out-

SEE HOMICIDES, 7A

Mendoza, Senate hit with bias complaint by ex-aide

A former Capitol employee alleges that she was retaliated against for a sexual harassment report accusing the state senator.

BY TARYN LUNA
tluna@sacbee.com

A former Capitol employee has filed a discrimination complaint against Sen. Tony Mendoza, the California Senate and two legislative officials, alleging that she was retaliated against for reporting sexual harassment.

Adriana Ruelas, a longtime Capitol employee and Mendoza's former legislative director, alleges that the state Senate fired her and two others in September after they complained to superiors and human resources workers about Mendoza's inappropriate behavior toward a young woman assigned to his Capitol office through a prestigious Sacramento State fellows program.

Tony Mendoza

The Senate has denied any connection between the complaints and the firings, arguing that employees complained about Mendoza's alleged behavior only after they were fired.

Ruelas detailed her allegations in a discrimination complaint she filed with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, among the preliminary steps the state requires someone to take

SEE MENDOZA, 11A

LOCAL

WILL MORE WATER BE SENT SOUTH?

Trump administration is trying to pump more water through the Delta south to San Joaquin Valley farmers. **1B**

SPORTS

GRUDEN: 'I HOPE I AM CANDIDATE'

Jon Gruden, who coached the Raiders from 1998 to 2001, acknowledges he is a candidate to replace Jack Del Rio. **1C**

Hatch to retire from Senate, opening path for Romney

BY JONATHAN MARTIN
New York Times

Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, the longest-serving Senate Republican, announced Tuesday that he will retire at the end of the year, rebuffing the pleas of President Donald Trump to seek an eighth term and paving the way for Mitt Romney, a critic of Trump's, to run for the seat.

Hatch made his decision public Tuesday afternoon via a video announcement.

"When the president visited Utah last month, he said I was a fighter. I've always been a fighter. I was an amateur boxer in my youth, and I've brought that fighting spirit with me to Washington," he said. "But every good fighter knows when to hang up the gloves. And for me, that time is soon approaching."

Orrin Hatch

Hatch, 83, was under heavy pressure from Trump to seek re-election and block Romney, who has been harshly critical of the president. But Hatch, who emerged as one of the president's most avid loyalists in the Senate, decided to retire after discussing the matter with his family over the holidays.

The veteran senator has amassed a distinguished record over his four decades in Washington and has become a fixture in a body once noted for its bipartisanship and now deeply polarized. Once considered an institution in his home state, Hatch was facing sobering poll numbers in Utah, where 75 percent of voters indicated in a survey last fall that they did not want him to run again.

Hatch's decision comes just weeks after Trump signed a comprehensive tax overhaul into law, a measure that the senator helped write as chairman of the Finance Committee. The bill represented something of a capstone to Hatch's career and Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., the majority leader, deemed it as such last month in what was seen as a subtle effort to usher his colleague to the exit.

Hatch's decision clears the way for the political resurrection of Romney, the former Massachusetts governor and 2012 Republican presidential nominee who is now a Utah resident and is popular in the Mormon-heavy state. Romney

SEE ROMNEY, 11A

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